Task force on food and PDS

*253. SHRI ABANI ROY:
SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted a task force on Food and Public Distribution to ensure that foodgrains reach the targeted poor;

(b) if so, its composition and the manner in which it would function;

(c) whether various anomalies in the existing Public Distribution System would also be checked by the task force; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (d) A list of suitable Officers has been drawn up in the Department of Food and Public Distribution so that, when situations arise necessitating investigation into the adequacy (or otherwise) of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in any area, alleged "starvation" and other matters concerning the supply and distribution of foodgrains, a Team of such Officers can quickly be deputed to these areas to assess the situation. Each Team of Officers is called a Task Force.

The Task Force constituted by the Department consists of 40 officers drawn from the Food Corporation of India and 10 officers from the Central Warehousing Corporation. Officers from the Department are also associated with these Teams, as per requirement.

So far, the Task Force Teams have been sent to Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. The deficiencies in the functioning of the Public Distribution System, as reported by the Teams, are brought to the notice of the respective State Governments for urgent remedial action.

Indo-French cooperation

*254. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Foreign Minister of France visited India in the month of

July-August, 2002 and had discussions on Indo-French co-operation in the political, economic, military, scientific and cultural fields and reviewed the strategic dialogue initiated between the two countries in 1998 to chalk out a way forward;

(b) if so, whether any agreements have been signed between the two countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) to what extent these agreements would give boost to the Indo-French ties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin visited India on 2nd-3rd August 2002. During his meetings with EAM a wide range of issues were discussed including an in depth review of bilateral political, economic, scientific and cultural cooperation as well as regional and international issues of mutual concern. The on-going strategic dialogue between the two countries was also reviewed.

(b) to (d) No agreement was signed during the visit.

Amendments in the Trade Union Act, 1926

*255. SHRI C. P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring amendments in the existing Trade Union Act, 1926, keeping in view recommendations of the Second Labour Commission;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have received any representations/ suggestions from the industry in this regard, if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the industry has suggested distinction between the Trade Union and registered Trade Union, if so, the suggested eligibility criteria; and

(e) Government's reaction thereto?